

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

By

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Chairman, Military Advisory Board
To The CNA Report
“National Security and the Threat of Climate Change”

Chairman Markey, members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to offer my testimony today. My last duty position was as Army Chief of Staff. I retired from active service in 1995 and am now the President of the Association of the United States Army.

Two years ago, I appeared at the first meeting of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming in my capacity as Chairman of the Military Advisory Board to the CNA report on “National Security and the Threat of Climate Change.” The Military Advisory Board consisted of 3- and 4- star flag and general officers from all four Services. Mr. Chairman, I request that this report be entered for the record.

Our charge was to learn as much as we could in a relatively short period about the emerging phenomenon of global climate change using our experience as military leaders to process our learning through a National Security lens. In other words, what are the national security implications of climate change?

In summary, what I reported then was that:

- First, climate change is a serious threat to our national security.
- Second, climate change will be what we called a “threat multiplier”. Many areas of the world that will be the hardest hit by climate change impacts are already being stressed by lack of water, lack of food, and political and social unrest. Adding climate change to this mix will only serve to exacerbate the existing instabilities.
- Third, projected climate change will add to tensions even in stable regions of the world.
- And fourth, that climate change, national security and energy dependence are a related set of global challenges.

In the two years since I appeared before the Committee, we’ve seen no evidence to contradict those findings. In fact, we’ve only seen them reinforced.

In concurrence with one of our recommendations, a National Intelligence Assessment on global climate change was conducted by the National Intelligence Council. The NIA remains classified, but public accounts of the assessment suggest very strong agreement with our findings.

Since our report, the scientific community, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has also continued their important work in examining climate change. What we have learned from their most recent work is that climate change is occurring at a much faster pace than the scientists previously thought it could. The Arctic is a case-in-point. Two years ago, scientists were reporting that the Arctic could be ice-free by 2040. Now, the scientists are telling us that it could happen within just a few years. The acceleration of the changes in the Arctic is stunning.

The trends of climatological data and concrete evidence of change continue to suggest the globe is changing in profound ways. I am not a scientist, nor are most of my colleagues on the Military Advisory Board. I would categorize us as military professionals accustomed to making decisions during times of uncertainty. We were trained to make decisions in situations defined by ambiguous information and little concrete knowledge of the enemy intent. We based our decisions on trends, experience, and judgment. We know that demanding 100% certainty during a crisis could be disastrous.

And so we ask: *Quo vadis?* Where do we go? I ask it in Latin because I mean to imply that it's a fundamental question. Where we go will be a reflection of our values. Right now, we are drifting off into uncharted waters. This is not the time to either wait for 100% certainty or simply hope our environment is not changing.

What can guide us in choosing our path is an understanding of the interrelated nature of these issues. Energy dependence. Climate change. Economic Revitalization. National Security. These are deeply related issues. As we consider investments in one, we must consider their impact on the whole.

My personal view is that the US is obliged to play a leadership role: Leadership by the US is key. The best opportunity for the US to demonstrate our global leadership is in Copenhagen, but I do believe we must take bold and swift steps here at home if we're to have the credibility necessary to lead in those important negotiations.

We must also show leadership on developing energy alternatives that reduce our reliance on fossil fuels from unstable regions of the world, reduce our energy consumption, and improve our nation's energy posture. That is the subject of the Military Advisory Board's next report on energy security and America's defense. I am hopeful that this report, which we will release soon, will make an important contribution to the national effort to retool America by advancing low carbon energy solutions that improve our nation's energy and national security posture.

I'll close with another reminder of something I said two years ago. I reflected on decades of service – working along side many great public servants who worked hard and risked their lives to protect our country. And I had begun to see that our country is now being threatened by a different kind of enemy. I'm here today as a retired military leader, making a case for you to consider climate change and energy dependence as national security threats. But I don't want to skate past this last point. What this country looks

like, what it feels like to live here, will also be changed. Tapping sugar maples in New England winters. Fishing off the Cape. Those were images I held close when stationed overseas. Those images were important to a soldier. I hope they're important to Members of Congress.